

have community members say, 'Okay, we know enough about the problems, so please come and work with us.' It's really a democratization of science itself."

Carpenter agrees. "The Mohawks argue very vigorously that they have coownership of any information that belongs to them," he says. "They say, 'You can't just take our blood and go off and publish and ignore us.' So it has to be a partnership."

For additional information on the environmental justice grants program, contact Allen Dearry or Sharon D. Beard at the NIEHS, PO Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709; phone: 919-541-1117.

Rebecca Clay Haynes

The NIEHS Recycles

With the help of a few dedicated employees and some 20,000 redworms, the NIEHS uses tons of waste every month that would otherwise have been dumped into landfills. By absorbing 30–40% of the institute's waste stream, the NIEHS recycling program, managed by the Environmental Awareness Advisory Committee (EAAC), has become one of the most successful in the federal government.

The redworms are the newest addition to the NIEHS waste management system,

which includes regular recycling of over 20 different materials. The worms are the productive part of two composting bins that were brought to the NIEHS last year. Each day, they work to turn 10–20 pounds of shredded paper and cafeteria waste into a rich mulch that is used for groundskeeping at the institute. Inside the two bins, which resemble oversized trash cans, the waste is piled on steel grates that are raised about a foot from the bottom. The worms feed on the waste and their castings fall through the grate, where they can be collected through doors built into the sides. Dick Sloane, project officer of the EAAC, says the worms are capable of producing a steady harvest of nutrient-rich fertilizer at a rate of 2–4 cubic feet per week.

As of August 1996, the NIEHS had recycled over one million pounds of material—over 20 pounds per employee per month. The following are the most commonly recycled materials at the NIEHS, with the percent of the total recycling effort that each comprises:

white office paper	33%
other office fiber paper	20%
corrugated cardboard	17%
magazines	15%
newspaper	6%
wooden palettes	1.5–2.0%



En route to new uses. The NIEHS recycles a variety of materials such as white paper, cardboard, glass, and plastics.

Other items that are recycled at the NIEHS in smaller amounts are beverage glass, telephone books, styrene foam, Tyvec labwear, aluminum cans, steel cans, plastics (#1, #2, #3, and #5), polystyrene laboratory plastics, floppy disks, cafeteria waste, and cold-pack bags. Because of shortages in demand, the institute has had to stop collecting some materials including glossy magazines and some types of plastic. Although aluminum cans account for less than 1% of the recyclable waste at the NIEHS, they generate more revenue than any of the other materials for the recycling program.

Most offices at the NIEHS are within a short distance of a set of recycling bins, which are emptied regularly by EAAC staff. In addition, most employees have wastebasket-sized receptacles at their desks that make it even more convenient to participate in the recycling effort. The well-designed recycling program at the NIEHS reflects the institute's commitment to protecting the environment.



Wiggly waste workers. A composting system at the NIEHS uses redworms to recycle 10–20 pounds of waste per day into a steady harvest of nutrient-rich fertilizer.

